

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-02 AGR-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 EB-11 FRB-03 H-03 INR-11 INT-08 L-03 LAB-06

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 AID-20 CIEP-03 SS-20

STR-08 TAR-02 TRSE-00 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 OMB-01

SWF-02 IO-14 DRC-01 /186 W
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R 290705Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7835

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEAN ECIN PFOR MY

SUBJECT: ASEAN ECONOMIC COORDINATION

REF: STATE 169116

1. SUMMARY. ASEAN AGREED IN PRINCIPLE AT ITS FONMINS
MEETING IN JAKARTA IN MAY TO ESTABLISH PERMANENT
SECRETARIAT IN THAT CITY. ACCORDING MALAYSIAN GOVT
OFFICIAL, CURRENT DISCUSSION AMONG MEMBERS IS WHETHER
SECRETARIAT SHOULD BE POLICY-MAKING BODY WITH
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CONCOMITANT POWERS AND AUTHORITY OR LOWER LEVEL AD-

MINISTRATIVE GROUP TO SERVICE STANDING ASEAN COMMITTEES. ASEAN PRESENTLY FUNCTIONS THROUGH NUMEROUS PERMANENT COMMITTEES AND AD-HOC GROUPS CHAIRED BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBER COUNTRIES. GOM FAVORS ASEAN FOCUSING ON ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ISSUES AND PROCEEDING CAUTIOUSLY IN POLITICAL AREAS. BECAUSE INDONESIA LARGEST AND RICHEST MEMBER, GOM VIEWS IT AS LOGICAL LEADER OF ASEAN. GOM SAYS INEVITABLE ASEAN MEMBERSHIP EVENTUALLY WILL INCLUDE OTHER COUNTRIES WITHIN NATURAL BOUNDARIES SOUTHEAST ASIA, E.G., BURMA, LAOS, CAMBODIA, NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARIAT. IN AUG 27 CALL BY EMBOFFS ON KHALIL YACOB, NEWLY APPOINTED PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY, ASEAN AND OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, KHALIL GAVE TOUR D'HORIZON OF GOM MFA THOUGHTS ON ASEAN. KHALIL, NOTING ASEAN COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE ESTABLISH PERMANENT ASEAN SECRETARIAT SAID THAT KEY QUESTION CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED BY ASEAN MEMBERS, IS WHETHER SECRETARIAT WILL BE POLICY-MAKING BODY WITH CONCOMITANT POWERS AND AUTHORITY OR SUPPORT GROUP PROVIDING ADMINISTRATIVE, RESEARCH, AND COORDINATIVE SERVICES TO PERMANENT ASEAN COMMITTEES. GOM FAVORS LATTER AS BEST APPROACH THIS FORMATIVE PERIOD ASEAN.

3. MECHANISMS. ASEAN FUNCTIONS THROUGH NUMEROUS STANDING COMMITTEES AND AD-HOC WORKING GROUPS FORMED FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND SPECIAL PROJECTS. COUNTRY THAT CHAIRS GROUP OR COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATION AMONG ASEAN MEMBERS.

4. ISSUES. KHALIL SAID GOM BELIEVES ASEAN SHOULD FOCUS ON ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ISSUES AND PROBLEMS AND SHOULD ONLY PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY INTO POLITICAL AREAS BECAUSE OF SENSITIVE ISSUES SUCH AS BOUNDARY DISPUTES AND TERRITORIAL CLAIMS IN REGION, WHICH GOM FEELS ASEAN TOO FRAGILE TO HANDLE AT PRESENT TIME.

5. LEADERSHIP. KHALIL COMMENTED THAT GOM VIEWS INDONESIA AS LOGICAL LEADER ASEAN BECAUSE OF ITS SIZE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND RESOURCES RELATIVE OTHER MEMBERS. SELECTION OF JAKARTA AS SITE ASEAN SECRETARIAT REFLECTS RECOGNITION BY MEMBERS OF INDONESIA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE. IN CONTEXT OF BURMA POSSIBLY ASSUMING MORE OUTWARD-LOOKING POSTURE, KHALIL YACOB NOTED THAT, AMONG ASEAN MEMBERS, INDONESIA PERCEIVED BY BURMA AS PREFERRED FOR CONSULTATIONS BECAUSE OF RELATIVE SIMILARITY OF REGIMES, AND THAT, SUCH CONSULTATIONS ON UNSPECIFIED TOPICS HAVE RECENTLY OC-

CURRED.

6. MEMBERSHIP. ACCORDING KHALIL ASEAN INEVIABLY WILL EXPAND MEMBERSHIP, THOUGH NOT IN NEAR FUTURE, TO INCLUDE OTHER COUNTRIES WITHIN NATURAL BOUNDARIES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, E.G., BURMA, LAOS, CAMBODIA, NORTH VIETNAM, SOUTH VIETNAM. SEVERAL THESE COUNTRIES ALREADY HAVE ATTENDED ASEAN MEETINGS AS OBSERVERS AND ASEAN PLANS CONTINUE INVITING THEM AS OBSERVERS TO MEETINGS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. GOM WOULD LIKE ASEAN SORT OUT ITS PROBLEMS AND DIRECTION, ESTABLISH ITSELF STRUCTURALLY, AND SHOW RECORD OF SOLID ACCOMPLISHMENT BEFORE DOORS OPENED TO NEW MEMBERS. GOM DOES NOT ENVISION EXTENDING MEMBERSHIP TO AUSTRALIA OR NEW ZEALAND.

7. KHALIL YACOB SAID THAT GOM SECRETARY GENERAL FOR ASEAN, YUSOF ARIFF WILL BE POSTED SOON AS AMBASSADOR TO AFRICAN COUNTRY. KHALIL DID NOT NAME HIS REPLACEMENT. UNDERHILL

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